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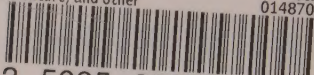


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# ADVENTURE



# ADVENTURE

*And Other Papers*

FRIDTJOF NANSEN

*Essay Index Reprint Series*

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# ADVENTURE

## I

### ADVENTURE <sup>1</sup>

SOLOMON is said to have compared "the people unto the sea, and orators and counsellors to the wind; for that the sea would be calm and quiet if the winds did not trouble it." If in the present case I may call you the sea, I am pretty sure that you are troubled enough already without the help of any orators. And yet, though I have never before felt any desire to cultivate windy oratory, I do wish I could be a tempest to-day, to do you credit.

But winds, whether strong or weak, may blow from so many quarters. I wonder what direction you expect me to blow from?

I have been wondering how on earth you ever came to think of making me your rector? Was it because long ago, long before you were born, I expect, a young fellow with the same name as mine made some journeys through the frozen North? You may have heard something about it when you were children. Or could it be because, during more recent years, my name has happened to be connected with several under-

<sup>1</sup> Rectorial Address delivered at St Andrews University, 3rd November 1926.

takings intended to alleviate the sufferings of unfortunate fellow-creatures?

I could not find out; and that was disheartening, as it might have given me my cue for this address, the delivery of which, I understand, will be my chief duty as your rector.

But after all, why should I worry? You will not remember what it was about anyhow.

You must not think that we old people are as self-satisfied as we seem. We know well enough that although you are extraordinarily nice to us, and evidently like to see us—sometimes at any rate—still, to be quite honest, you often think us intolerable bores with our heavy learning and good advice—at least I remember I did when I was your age—and not without reason perhaps.

Long ago La Rochefoucauld said that, “old folk like to give good precepts in order to console themselves for no longer being able to give bad examples.” I do not know that we can altogether accept that definition, though there may be more truth in it than we realise at first.

I am sure, however, we shall all agree with the same sage, when he said that: “we never meet with any intelligent people but those who are of the same opinion as ourselves.” As a rule, it is only by sad experience that we are enabled to verify the wisdom of opinions that differ from ours. How much easier life would be if we could be taught by others! But the real wisdom of life we have to discover with our own eyes.

“Experience doth take dreadfully high wages,”

your immortal Carlyle said, "but she teacheth like none other." Stick to that, young friends! Listen to authority and age; you may learn a great deal from those who are older than yourselves—but trust your own eyes still more, and keep them open. A truth acquired by the use of your own eyes, though imperfect, is worth ten truths told you by others, for besides increasing your knowledge, it has improved your capacity to see.

But although I believe that as strongly as any of you, here I stand, none the less, your rector, rather an old man, I am sorry to say, and I have to deliver an improving address to you who are setting sail on your voyage through life.

What shall I say? Well, I presume that a rectorial address should first say a few wise words about the ocean of life which you are to navigate. But I am afraid I can make you no wiser in that respect, the sea is so rough now, and the mist and scud so dense that it is difficult to see ahead.

A dangerous sea for the young to navigate, they say. I should think it would be a remarkably interesting voyage. One act of the play is finished—a new act is just beginning. There is ferment everywhere. Old established truths are overthrown; it is for you to find new ones.

Yes, indeed, the sea is difficult. Many may be wrecked, perhaps; but all the more will remain to be done by every one of you who has got the grit to do it.

My friend Amundsen observed the other day that he was glad he was not born later, as then

there would have been nothing left for him to explore except the moon. It made me think of Martin Frobisher who, three hundred and fifty years ago, "resolved wyth himselfe to go . . . and to accomplishe" the North-West Passage "or bring true certificate of the truth, or else never to retourne againe, knowing this to be the onely thing of the worlde that was left yet undone, whereby a notable mind mighte be made famous and fortunate."

Now, it is not the aim and end of life to become "famous and fortunate." It is not so easy as that. You have come here to do your part and to do it well, wherever you are placed. And there have been many things worth doing since Frobisher's days, and there will be more than enough for you too, my friends. Let me speak of some of them.

We have heard much lately about the *decline of European civilisation*; it has reached its old age, they say, and is on its way down hill. And amongst other things they point to the lack of originality and a certain alarming sterility in the productiveness of the West-European brain nowadays, perhaps especially manifesting itself in the art of our time, and in the lack of commanding personalities.

But do not allow yourselves to become pessimists. This talk of decline is nothing new. Let us get it into true perspective. We like, of course, to think that mankind is constantly making progress; it is such a nice comforting idea. But is

it right? Progress implies that we know whither we are going; and we can only advance towards a fixed point. But such a point is just what is lacking. You will remember that Archimedes long ago said, though in a different connection: "Give me a fixed point and I can lift the earth!"

Fancy if some of the ancient leaders of thought—Buddha, Socrates, Christ—came back to us, and we showed them all our marvellous inventions, and our scientific discoveries, the results of the great progress since their days. Would they not smile indulgently at us—as we smile at our children when they show us their favourite toys?

I imagine the following dialogue might have taken place between Socrates and Marconi:

*Socrates*, after having seen all the inventions, would say: "This is all very interesting, but what have you learnt about yourself?"

*Marconi*: "But do you not see what enormous importance it has for the whole of human life, for business, for economic conditions and development to be able to convey information quickly!"

*Socrates*: "But how has it all helped *you*? Have you become a better man by it? And then if it helps some people, perhaps others suffer."

*Marconi*: "But look at the broadcasting which brings beautiful music and good lectures to thousands, and even to millions, of people!"

*Socrates*: "How, then, do these people get time for that which is infinitely more important, to *think for themselves*?"

No, we have no reason to boast ourselves better



than our fathers. Indeed, it is more than doubtful whether there is any proof of the superiority of the so-called "civilised man" over his "uncivilised" ancestors. Let us go back some five or six thousand years to the ancient Egyptians, living in a Stone-age. When we see what those people accomplished with their implements, can we say honestly that we feel ourselves superior to them?

And if we go still further back—some twelve or fifteen thousand years—we find the Cro-Magnon people, a race certainly in no respect inferior to any of us. With a magnificent stature, taller than we are, perhaps six feet three inches in height, and what skulls! Look at that beautiful high arch of intelligence from the fine forehead to the neck! A cranium with one-sixth more brain than that of the modern European. Fancy if such a man had the education and knowledge of an undergraduate of our days, what could he not have made out of life if placed in our midst? He would certainly have done at least as well as any of us.

Oh no, my friends, let us be modest. The rising trend of evolution, which carried our ancestors from the level of the apes to that of the Cro-Magnon people, stopped thousands of years ago owing to the conditions of modern social life, especially to its urbanisation, which interfere with the "survival of the fittest," and make the inferior elements of mankind the most prolific. The human race is certainly still changing, and chang-



ing rapidly—but “it is no use galloping if you are going in the wrong direction.”

These are questions of the very gravest importance, to be earnestly studied by those of you who are going to be the reformers we await so anxiously.

But surely, even if the race may not have improved physically of late, our *ideas* have done so. Our *ethics* and *morality* have developed far beyond the primitive stage. Yes, certainly, so far as individuals go, though not to the extent that many people think, and certainly not when the individuals combine into groups.

Nations have hardly begun as yet to have real morality. They are little more than collections of beasts of prey. Private human virtues such as modesty, unselfishness, charity, love of one's neighbour, the feeling of solidarity, still strike them only too often as ridiculous folly if they are urged to practise them in their policies.

This may sound a harsh judgment, and perhaps it is too harsh. But let me give you an example that should have shocked much more profoundly than it did the public conscience of mankind. I mean the proceedings of the special Assembly of the League of Nations in March last.

Now, this League is just a great and remarkable adventure, a new ship sailing out along new tracks with the future hopes of mankind on board. It marks, we trust, the beginning of a new era in the world's history, attempting as it does to introduce into the dealings between nations respect for those

virtues I mentioned, and to create a feeling of solidarity, and establish real co-operation between them for the betterment of the world. We therefore expected much. But, alas! a new spirit of the world cannot be created in a day, and amongst the crew of that ship there are still many sailors who have not forgotten their old habits.

The nations of the world met in Geneva in March for one single purpose, which everyone believed to be not only desirable, but even essential to the future of Europe—the purpose of admitting Germany to the League. Everyone imagined that the way was clear. After the Locarno meetings, after the noble speeches breathing international brotherhood and love, we really thought that the nations of the world had at last turned over a new leaf. We may still hope, since the events of this September, that Locarno may have been the beginning of something new and better.

But in March a great many of our first bright hopes were tragically dispelled. Then we had the spectacle of one nation after another raising obstacles to the fulfilment of our common purpose, and doing so with a disregard for decency which we had none of us believed it would be possible for them to show.

And in the end, as you remember, we had to leave Geneva defeated and dismayed, because some states were still determined to think solely of their own interests instead of the world at large.

Well, in September we repaired in part the disaster that had happened, and we are profoundly grateful for much that was said and done. But we remember, too, the foul, occult powers that were at work in March, and remembering them we cannot resist the conviction that there is something rotten outside Hamlet's State of Denmark.

Let me, however, give you another example: the Russian famine in 1921-22, when the Volga region and the most fertile parts of Russia were ravaged by a terrible drought—when something like thirty million people, or more, were starving and dying—dying by the thousand. . . .

A heart-rending appeal for help went out to all the world, and eventually a great many people in this and in other countries helped, and helped generously. But many more were busy trying to find out first who was to blame. Was it the drought? Or was it the political system of the Russian State? As if that could ameliorate the terrible suffering or make any difference whatever to those who were dying of starvation!

But what was worse, there was in various trans-Atlantic countries such an abundance of maize at that time that the farmers did not know how to get rid of it before the new harvest, so they had to burn it as fuel in their railway engines. At the same time the ships in Europe were idle, and laid up, for there were no cargoes. Simultaneously there were thousands, nay millions, of unemployed. All this while thirty million people in the Volga region—not far away and easily reached by

means of our ships—were allowed to starve and die, the politicians of the world at large, except in the United States, trying to find an excuse for doing nothing in the pretext that it was the Russians' own fault—a result of the Bolshevik system.

Fancy, if the unemployed had been put on board the idle ships, had been sent to South America, and had brought the maize to the Black Sea and saved the stricken millions, how much suffering they could have relieved. Do you not think the world would have been the better for it? I tell you that there is something rotten in the condition of the world. There is still ample scope for improvement.

The touchstone of real culture should be the feeling of solidarity. You, your family, your class, your nation, are only parts of the whole, passing links in space and time. But of that feeling there seems to be nothing as yet between nations, and mighty little between classes. In their relations you still have the morality of the savage who only considers his own advantage.

How strange that we have not yet outgrown these perpetual struggles and disputes between different classes of the same people about the division of the profit; that we have no more rational means of settling them than brute force: *strikes* and *lock-outs*—and that we use these weapons and stop working, even when there is unemployment and privation.

I often wonder what an inhabitant of some other

globe would say if he could look down and see how we manage things upon this little planet of ours. Would he think that there were intelligent beings on this earth? Wasn't it Bernard Shaw who said some time ago that he did not know what the inhabitants of the other globes were doing, but he was firmly convinced that they used our earth as their lunatic asylum.

Yes, there can be no doubt that excessive nationalism as well as class warfare are dangers. But there may be dangers on the other side too. Let us not forget that national patriotism, as was mentioned by Lord Cecil in the last Assembly of the League, is a necessary stimulus for the development of the world.

Beware of the tendency towards too much internationalism, towards unification, towards creating a great uniform human family. Desirable as it might be in some respects I cannot help seeing a great danger in it. Increasing urbanisation, uniform education, the rapidly improving means of transport and communication tend to abolish distance, and to wipe out those characteristic differences between peoples, nations, and cultures which have made life interesting and beautiful, and acted as an important stimulus to new thought.

There are several ideals in vogue nowadays, which, if realised, would lead us towards a dangerous monotony, a uniform grayness, in which it would be difficult to develop one's own personality.

All this may be difficult to alter, but we ought not to shut our eyes to it.

It is not very encouraging the picture which your rector has drawn of the sea you have to navigate, of the stage on which you have to act your part in life. He has drawn it to the best of his knowledge, well aware that it is useless to paint with rosy colours when you will so soon be caught in the baffling gray mists of reality.

But you have the buoyant strength of youth, and when they tell you civilisation is going downhill, remember it has been bad enough many times before in history. In spite of its age the world is young. And let us trust that we are in the spring when a new summer is born.

“ April for me I choose;  
In it the old things tumble,  
In it things new refresh us;  
It makes a mighty rumble,—  
But peace is not so precious  
As that his *will* man shows.

. . . . .  
In April the summer grows.”<sup>1</sup>

What we call development goes in great waves up and down. If you are in the trough you have always the possibility of rising on to a crest ahead of you. The great thing in human life is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. And, mind you, it is not the stage that makes your actions great or small. It is for you yourselves to create your rôle on the stage.

<sup>1</sup> Translation by A. H. Palmer from *Björnstjerne Björnson*.



“ Men at some time are masters of their fates,  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.”

If the world is out of joint it is for you to put it right, to make it a better place to live in, each of you to the best of his ability. As I told you, there is ample scope for improvement.

The old beaten tracks do not take us to our goal. It is time to begin prospecting in new lands. We need you, young friends, with fresh eyes capable of seeing the simple, elemental things—ready to try new trails, to run risks, and dare the unknown.

My distinguished predecessors, Barrie and Kipling, have spoken to you about *courage* and about *independence*, two heaven-born qualities for this voyage of life, and never more needed than in our day. They are worth infinitely more than all your wireless, and broadcasting, and all the rest. But a third genius is needed to complete the group of deities—it is the *spirit of adventure*. It is about this genius that I wish to say a few words to you to-day.

Who is she? No less than the spirit that urges mankind forward on the way towards knowledge. The soul's mysterious impulse to fill the void spaces, analogous to Nature's *horror vacui*.

Don't you remember how, as a child, when some part of the house was closed, and vaguely suspected of being haunted, you felt fearfully frightened—and yet pined to get in there to meet those mysterious ghosts? The risks added to the

charm. And one day when you were alone, you somehow managed to get in. But how disappointed you were when you saw no ghosts after all! That was your awakening spirit of adventure. It is in every one of us. It is our mysterious longing to do things, to fill life with something more than our daily walk from home to office, and from office back home again.

It is our perpetual yearning to overcome difficulties and dangers, to see the hidden things, to penetrate into the regions outside our beaten track—it is the *call of the unknown*—the longing for the Land of Beyond, the divine force deeply rooted in the soul of man which drove the first hunters out into new regions—the mainspring perhaps of our greatest actions—of winged human thought knowing no bounds to its freedom.

We will find in the lives of men who have done anything, of those whom we call great men, that it is this spirit of adventure, the call of the unknown, that has lured and urged them on along their course.

Kipling says in *Kim*: “God causes men to be born . . . who have a lust to go abroad at the risk of their lives and discover news—to-day it may be of far-off things—to-morrow of some hidden mountain—and the next day of some near-by men who have done a foolishness against the State. These souls are very few, and of these few not more than ten are of the best.” But, my young friends, though modesty is a becoming



virtue, let us always believe that we are amongst those ten!

For most of us ordinary people life is a voyage from harbour to harbour, along a fairly safe coast. We run no great risks. There are plenty of shoals and sunken rocks, no doubt; but we have reliable charts and sailing directions, and if anything unforeseen should happen, we can always put in for the night at the nearest port. On the whole a fairly comfortable and not very exciting existence. But what about the things worth doing, the achievements, the *aims* to live and die for?

No, although so many of us have to do it, coastal navigation is not really to the liking of our race. Our ancestors, yours and mine—the Norsemen—they did not hug the coast. With their undaunted spirit of adventure they hoisted their sails for distant shores, and no fear of risks could keep them back—the call of the unknown summoned them across the seas, and it was *they* who led the way across the oceans. If it had not been for that spirit of adventure in our race, how differently history would read to-day—and in my opinion the difference would not be for the better.

Let me tell you an example of the awakening spirit of adventure in the history of the British Empire—how it led on the one hand to disaster, but on the other to greatness.

In the middle of the sixteenth century England's power on the sea was very modest. We hear, for instance, that in 1540 London had, with the exception of the royal fleet, only four vessels of more

than 120 tons burden. Then awoke the idea that it might be possible to find a short route to the riches of Cathay or China, north of Norway and Russia. This seemed a promising adventure. The merchants of London, a society named "The Mystery and Company of the Merchant Adventurers," equipped three ships, and placed the expedition under the command of the gallant general Sir Hugh Willoughby, on account "of his tall, handsome appearance, and of his rare qualities as a soldier."

The ships sailed in May 1553, amid great expectations and much rejoicing. Willoughby with two ships and sixty-two men had to winter on the coast of the Kola Peninsula, and when Russian fishermen came to the place next spring they found two ships with only dead men on board. They had all died of scurvy. When the two ships were subsequently sailed homeward, one of them was wrecked on the coast of Norway and the new crew lost, the other, with twenty-four men on board, disappeared and was never heard of again.

Such was the unlucky fate of those two ships in spite of their names, *Bona Esperanza* and *Bona Confidentia*. But the third vessel, *Edward Bonaventure*, under command of the able Richard Chancellor, was separated from the two other ships in a gale north of Norway, and arrived at Vardö. Here Chancellor evidently heard about the route to the White Sea and the trade between the Norwegians and the Russians. This was a

new adventure, and as the other ships never came, he decided to try that route.

He met, however, with some Scotsmen, who do not seem to have been as enterprising as Scotsmen are supposed to be. They warned him earnestly against the voyage, but he sailed all the same, "determining," as he declared, "either to bring that to passe which was intended, or else to die the death." They came into the White Sea and to the river Dvina. Chancellor went to Moscow and was well received by the Russian Czar, Ivan the Terrible. Next summer he returned in his ship to England, bearing a letter from the Czar.

This voyage and the so-called discovery of this old Norse route to Russia through the White Sea form an important turning-point in the development of English commerce and shipping.

It meant the opening of a great new market for English goods. A profitable trade with Russia developed quickly, and the *Muscovy Company*, which received special privileges, became so rich and powerful that it could soon support important undertakings in other parts of the world as well. A rapid development of the English mercantile marine followed.

Thus it came about that England was soon in a position to compete with the stronger seapowers even in other regions.

This episode, in fact, marks the beginning of Great Britain's power on the sea. The story shows how apparently small accidents may prove decisive in the history of a whole people. If those

ships had not been separated, how differently everything might have turned out. But still more: if it had not been for the true spirit of adventure in that one man, Richard Chancellor, and if he had not been of the type who grasp their opportunities, he would not have entered the White Sea, England's important trade with Russia would not have commenced at that time, the development of her shipping would have been very different, and the history of the world would have proceeded along other lines.

I am convinced that the future development of the possibilities of your own people, as well as of those of mankind, will depend on some of you young people striking boldly out along new tracks. I am sure that the great events in the world depend on the spirit of adventure shown by certain individuals in grasping opportunities when they occur.

And so it is in the personal life of every one of us. Let me tell you a little about myself, not because that self is a personage of any great importance, or a good example; but simply because it is the only one I have. And we must all of us judge life from the standpoint of our own experience.

Now, when I look back upon my own life, it strikes me that if anything worth doing has ever been accomplished on that crooked course of regrettable irregularities, it was only due to a certain spirit of adventure, acting, however, in a sporadic and imperfect way.

In his admirable address, Barrie proposed that

a good subject for his successor's rectorial address would be: "the mess the rector himself has made of life." Little did he know how much to the point that subject would be for your present rector. Barrie warned you against M'Connachie, his imaginary other half, who is always flying around on one wing, dragging him with him. And what shall we other poor mortals say, whose M'Connachie's do not write charming plays for us, like Barrie's, but merely lead us astray?

How many nasty tricks that unruly fellow has played me! When we were young, and plodding steadily along a fairly promising road, he would suddenly bolt up some unexpected side-track, and I had to follow and try to make the best of it.

Now, do not mistake that fanciful creature for the spirit of adventure. Far from it, he is just Master Irresponsible—an emotional, impulsive, and quarrelsome person, who is very easily bored, and thinks it extremely dull when you go on with the same thing for long, and who, therefore, is always on the look-out for something new to turn up, like a child looking round for new things to play with.

But the spirit of adventure may still save the situation and see you through, once you have been diverted on to a new trail. For its nature is not to want continually to change; on the contrary it is to want to see the end of things. And once you have embarked upon an undertaking, the spirit of adventure will not give in—whether you sink or swim—till the work is done and done well.

Do not think that adventure is child's play, or that the heights can be won in a day. You wish to rise and be great; but remember:

“The heights by great men reached and kept,  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upwards in the night.”

Real greatness was *never* attained without patience and industry. “Genius is an inexhaustible power of taking trouble,” Carlyle said. “Patience is power,” adds an Eastern proverb, “with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes satin.”

Check Master Irresponsible then, and consider well before you move. Make your preparations carefully; they can never be too careful—the road is long. No guess-work, no approximations. But when you strike out, then throw your whole self into the enterprise. Set all your sails. No wavering, for “self-trust is the first secret of success”—don't check your boat when you are tacking.

We pass many cross-roads on our way through life, and the test of a man is how he behaves at each cross-road. Some people cannot decide, they waver, wishing to keep all ways open, and always looking back they end by getting nowhere. The traveller of the right mettle may consider well, but then he takes one road and sticks to that; and he always arrives somewhere. For him the only road is then the road ahead of him, and there is no way back.



I have always thought that the much-praised "*line of retreat*" is a snare for people who wish to reach their goal.

Let me tell you one secret of such so-called successes as there may have been in my life, and here I believe I give you really good advice. It was to burn my boats and demolish the bridges behind me. Then one loses no time in looking behind, when one should have quite enough to do in looking ahead—then there is no choice for you or your men but *forward*. You have to do or die!

Let me try to tell you how it worked in my case. I have to apologise once more for devoting so much time to myself; but I see no way of avoiding that, if I am really to tell you something about life. I was an undergraduate once, even younger than most of you probably, and a "ne'er-do-weel" except for some little sport, perhaps. According to Carlyle, "the first of all problems for a man to find out is what kind of work he is to do in this universe." But even this little problem I had not been able to solve.

I had a leaning to science; but to which science? Physics and Chemistry interested me most; but Master Irresponsible—over whom I had no control at that time—did not like that kind of life much. One day he suddenly took it into his head that Zoology would be better, as that promised more fun—more shooting and out-of-door life. Consequently we went in for Zoology.

Then one day, the irresponsible creature suddenly suggested that we should go on a voyage to

the Arctic Sea, under the pretext of studying the animal life of the polar regions. I was twenty then—and off we went! That was the first fatal step that led me astray from the quiet life of science.

It gave me more Arctic sport, more interest in various polar problems than actual zoological research, and on that voyage we were caught and beset in the pack-ice, and drifted for over three weeks towards the then unknown east coast of Greenland. I saw the mountains and glaciers, and a longing awoke in me, and vague plans revolved in my mind of exploring the unknown interior of that mysterious, ice-covered land. I returned home. I was made Curator of the Zoological Museum at Bergen. The Arctic dreams were more or less forgotten. I went in, body and soul, for Zoology, and especially for microscopical Anatomy. For six years I lived in a microscope. It was an entirely new world, and Master Irresponsible kept fairly quiet during those years, and we were well on the way to become a promising young zoologist.

During that period, too, I visited this university, just forty years ago this autumn, and met for the first time your great zoologist, my old friend Professor M'Intosh, who is still amongst us. While I was Curator in Bergen I was also visited by a young Scottish zoologist, my friend D'Arcy Thompson, who is now one of your professors.

I wrote some works, especially on the microscopical anatomy of the nervous system. They



contained some discoveries of value, I believe, but still more important were perhaps the new problems which they raised. We were full of ambitious plans for new investigations to solve those problems. Most of those investigations have later been made by others, but some of the problems are still waiting to be solved, I believe.

Anyhow, we had possibilities of doing work worth doing, and of becoming a sound man of science and a university professor. I still feel a pang of regret when I think of those lost opportunities.

But just then Master Irresponsible took advantage of a weak moment, and played me one of his most fatal tricks. We had just finished a treatise on the nervous system, with the result that the author's own nervous system was overstrained and needed a little rest. Then he brought back the Arctic dreams and told me that the time had come to carry out our old plan of crossing Greenland. It would not take long, and we could soon return to the nervous system again with renewed vigour. He would not have succeeded if he had not been joined by a stronger ally, the spirit of adventure. To resist those two together was hopeless, I had to go!

Many attempts had been made to cross Greenland, the unknown interior of which was supposed to be covered by an enormous ice-cap, called the Inland-ice. But all these attempts had been made from the inhabited west coast and had not succeeded. How, then, was my plan formed?

It was one autumn evening in Bergen, in 1883. I was sitting and listening indifferently as the day's paper was being read by my friend the clergyman. But suddenly my attention was roused by a telegram: Nordenskiöld had come back from his expedition towards the interior of Greenland; he had had two Lapps with him, who had found good snow for skiing, and had covered incredible distances on ski. In that same moment it struck me that an expedition of Norwegian ski-runners, going in the opposite direction, from east to west, will cross Greenland. The plan was ready.

My idea was this, that if one started as previous expeditions had done, from the west side, one would have the "flesh-pots of Egypt" behind one, and in front the unexplored desert of ice and the east coast, which is little better. So it struck me that the only sure road to success was to force a passage through the floe-belt, land on the desolate and ice-bound east coast of Greenland, and thence cross through the unknown over to the inhabited west coast. In this way one would burn one's boats behind one; there would be no need to urge one's men on, as the east coast would attract no one back, while in front would lie the colonies on the west coast with the allurements and amenities of civilisation.

This plan when it was published was declared by the so-called "competent authorities" to be utterly impossible. One of them, a Dane, who had travelled along the ice-bound east coast of Greenland, where I proposed to land, declared in

a public lecture that the plan "betrayed absolute ignorance of the true conditions" and showed "such absolute recklessness that it was scarcely possible to criticise it seriously." I dare say he was right in his way. Some authorities criticised especially the unpardonable rashness of destroying the bridges behind you. The first thought of a good general and leader was always to secure a safe line of retreat, without which his men would not go on with confidence.

But I had always thought "the line of retreat" a wretched invention, as I told you before. And I was justified by the events. In spite of my youthful ignorance and lack of experience, and although our preparations and equipment were lamentably imperfect in several respects—as my companion Captain Sverdrup, here present, would tell you if he were to give you his candid opinion—the expedition was carried out in accordance with the plan. The method worked out extremely well, the lack of the line of retreat simplified matters and acted as a stimulus, making up for the defects in our preparations.

The same method was also used for our next expedition. Of course, having once really set foot on the Arctic trail, and heard the "call of the wild," the call of "the unknown regions," we could not return to the microscope and the histology of the nervous system again, much as I longed to do so.

I had conceived an idea that there was a continuous drift of the ice across the unknown

regions round the North Pole, from the sea north of Bering Straits and Siberia on into the sea between Greenland and Spitzbergen. I found more and more proofs which definitely convinced me of the existence of such a drift. Then it struck me that this drift of the ice could be used for the transport of an expedition across the unknown regions. It would only mean building a ship of a special shape, sufficiently strong to resist the ice-pressure, and this ship we could push as far as possible into the pack-ice on the side where it was drifting northwards, let her be frozen in, and then the ice would carry us across the regions which the previous expeditions had tried in vain to reach. It simply meant working with the forces of nature instead of against them.

Here again the same principle was applied. Once we were well started on this expedition, there would be no line of retreat. Our hope was ahead of us, and so the ship was called the *Fram*, which means *Forward*.

When this plan was published it was severely attacked by most of the very first authorities on polar exploration in Great Britain and in other countries. As the prominent Arctic navigator, Admiral Sir George Nares, expressed it: It totally disregarded the adopted Arctic axioms for successfully navigating an icy region, which were, "that it is absolutely necessary to keep close to a coast line, and that the farther we advance from civilisation, the more desirable it is to insure a reasonably safe line of retreat." He did not

believe in a drift of the polar ice as assumed by me.

That splendid Arctic explorer, Admiral Sir Leopold M'Clintock, said that it was impossible to build a ship strong enough to resist the ice pressure in the winter, and he believed, as did the majority of the others, that there was no probability of ever seeing the *Fram* again when once she had given herself over to the pitiless polar ice.

The ship was built. Her famous builder with the Scottish name, Colin Archer, was a Norwegian whose father had come from this country. The expedition was carried out in full accordance with the plan. We had a great deal more knowledge and more experience this time. The drift of the ice was found to be very nearly what was expected, and the ship was strong enough to resist even the most desperate attacks of the ice. We went into the pack-ice north of the New Siberian Islands in 1893, and the ship came out of the ice again north of Spitzbergen three years later, safe and sound, after having drifted across the unknown regions.

But the spirit of adventure is always urging you on, once you begin to listen to it. When we had drifted with the *Fram* for a long time, we saw that she would drift across, and the end of the expedition would be attained.

But then the adventurous spirit found out that something more could be done by two of us leaving the ship with dogs and sledges. We could travel across the drift-ice towards the Pole, and in that way explore parts of the unknown regions



outside the drift-route of the *Fram*. But in that case we could not think of returning to the drifting ship, as we should not know where she had drifted to in the meantime. We should have to go to Franz Josef Land and Spitzbergen where we might find a sealing vessel to bring us home. Again we had to break the line of retreat, and again the method worked well.

Hjalmar Johansen went with me and, while the *Fram* and the rest of the expedition were left in the safe hands of Captain Sverdrup, we set off from the ship with dogs and sledges on 14th March 1895.

We expected our sledge-expedition to last three months at most, and carried food for that period. But the ice was more difficult than we expected. At last we reached the north coast of a land which afterwards turned out to be Franz Josef Land, but it was so late in the season that we could not get through, so we had to winter. Instead of the three months we were provisioned for, we had to live through fifteen months before we met with people.

We built a stone hut, we shot bears and walrus, and for ten months we tasted nothing but bear-meat. The hides of the walrus we used for the roof of our hut, and the blubber for fuel. In the following summer we quite unexpectedly met British people, the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition, on the south coast of Franz Josef Land, and came home in their ship.

I tell you all this just to make you understand

how things that might seem impossible can be done when you have to do them, and how a life you may think hard is easily lived when you have a goal to work for. You may think it was hard to live a long winter dug in, and on nothing but bear-meat; but I can assure you it was a happy time, for we had the spring and the home-coming to look forward to.

You may notice that in the case of these plans, as also on many occasions later in life, I had the misfortune to have most of the competent authorities of the world against me, declaring my views and my plans to be impossible. However, I had had the advantage of living a great deal alone in my life, and had thus acquired the habit of making up my mind without asking the opinion of others.

It has obvious advantages to stand alone; it makes you more independent in your action, and you are less apt to be misled by others. Ibsen said that that man is strongest who stands most alone.

But this does not imply that every man who stands alone is strong, or that every plan which competent people declare to be impossible should be attempted. Beware of obstinacy and fool-hardiness! For a strong man there is a great danger in resistance and contradiction. It takes a superior man to allow himself to be convinced in the heat of argument by the logic of another.

I think it was Montaigne who wondered whether the fanaticism which is created by unflinching

defiance of the judge's violence and of the danger has not more than once made a man persist, even to the stake, in an opinion for which—among friends and in freedom—he would not have singed his little finger. There is certainly a profound truth there. It is the spirit of adventure, but the reverse of the medal.

You have to take risks, and cannot allow yourself to be frightened by them when you are convinced that you are following the right course. Nothing worth having in life is ever attained without taking risks. But they should be in reasonable proportion to the results which you hope to attain by your enterprise, and should not merely depend on luck, giving your ability to overcome the risks no chance of coming into play. Even an animal may have that kind of foolhardiness; and success can give you no real satisfaction if it depends on mere accident.

Let me tell you a case where, in my opinion, the risks should not have been taken. It was the ill-fated expedition of the prominent Swede Andrée. He had formed a project of crossing the unknown North Polar regions in a balloon. It was in 1896, before the days of the dirigibles. He hoped to be able to keep the balloon up during the time required for the winds to carry it across the unknown regions.

He went to Spitzbergen in 1896, intending to start from there in his balloon, *Örnen* (i.e. the Eagle). He did not, however, think the meteorological conditions sufficiently favourable for a



start that summer. He therefore returned and postponed his start till the following year.

In the meantime we came back from our expedition in the *Fram*, across the unknown North Polar Sea, and our meteorological observations collected during three years in those regions were naturally of great interest to Andrée. At his request I sent him a full extract of them when he was again on his way north to Spitzbergen in the early summer of 1897. I also sent him a letter in which I pointed out that—as he would see—the prevailing winds and the meteorological conditions during the summer months would not as a rule be favourable to his undertaking. And I expressed the hope that, as he had once had the courage to return when he saw that the conditions were unfavourable, he would be able to show the same courage again.

He wrote back from Tromsö, thanked me for the documents and my kind advice, but declared that he would not be able to show that courage a second time.

On 11th July 1897, the noble Swede and his two gallant companions started on their flight from Spitzbergen into the unknown. They never returned.

This was certainly the noble spirit of adventure, which did not shrink back before risks. We cannot but admire it, but we profoundly regret that those splendid qualities could not have been used for a better purpose.

Why do I give you these examples from the life

of exploration and adventure? Because all of us are explorers in life, whatever trail we follow. Because it is the explorers with the true spirit of adventure we now need if humanity shall really overcome the present difficulties, and find the right course across that dangerous sea ahead of us which I mentioned at the beginning of this address. You will all find your adventure, for life itself is an adventure.

But try not to waste your time in doing things which you know can be done equally well by others. Everyone should try to hit upon his own trail. Do not lose your opportunities, and do not allow yourselves to be carried away by the superficial rush and scramble which is modern life.

The first great thing is to find yourself, and for that you need solitude and contemplation, at least sometimes. I tell you deliverance will not come from the rushing, noisy centres of civilisation. It will come from the lonely places! The great reformers in history have come from the wilderness.

My friend Knud Rasmussen—whom we regret not to have amongst us to-day—told me a remarkable story about a medicine-man or conjurer of the primitive Eskimo of the Barren Grounds in northern Canada. I should like, for your benefit, to repeat it here. This simple savage, who had hardly ever seen a white man, said to his friend and colleague, Rasmussen: "The true wisdom is only found far from men, out in the great solitude, and can only be attained through suffering. Privation and suffering are the only road to

wisdom, and they alone can open a man's mind for that which is hidden to others."

I think these words of a savage show more understanding of the secret of wisdom than you will find in a great many people in our countries. He went on to describe how, in order to become a sage, *i.e.* a medicine-man or conjurer, a man has to fast for fourteen days in an unheated snow-hut at the coldest time in the middle of winter. Then comes another medicine-man with a drink of hot water and a little raw meat. And after that the man has to go on fasting again as long as he possibly can. He should never finish his struggle for wisdom; but most people are satisfied too soon, and that is the reason why there is so little wisdom in the world.

This is in the true spirit of adventure, which must always press on. It makes one think of these lines by Tennyson:

" This gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

These are questions well worth thinking over; but I tell you there are many people who do not get time even to think over what they themselves hold to be the purpose of their lives? What is the purpose of yours? Are you all of you certain you have the answer ready?

Are you out for happiness? Well, many people are. But believe me, my friends, you need not look for it. The great thing is *to do your best*, and

to be *independent* of all other "necessities." Dear me, how perfectly unnecessary many of these "necessities" really are.

" And if through chance of circumstance  
 We have to go barefoot, sir,  
 We'll not repine—a friend of mine  
 Has got no feet to boot, sir.  
 This Happiness a habit is  
 And Life is what we make it:  
 See! there's the trail to Sunnydale!  
 Up, friend! and let us take it."

Are you poor? What luck. No time lost in looking after your belongings. There is always so much trouble with property. And you cannot really be poor on this earth. Let me tell you what our great poet Wergeland once said:

" Have I no heaven because it is full of drifting clouds,  
 fairylands of the sun? . . .  
 Complain not under the stars of the lack of bright spots  
 in your life!  
 Ha! are they not twinkling as if they would speak to  
 you?  
 How Venus sparkles to-night! Have the heavens also  
 Spring? . . .  
 What riches for a mortal!"

My dear young friends, let me give you one warning based on long and sad experience. Do not let your flight be clogged by all those trifles which are now considered necessities of life. Mind you, by making your baggage-train longer you clip your wings.

Oh youth, youth! what a glorious word! Unknown realms ahead of you, hidden behind the mists of the morning. As you move on, new islands appear, mountain-summits shoot up through the clearing mists, one behind another, waiting for you to climb; dense new forests unfold for you to explore; free boundless plains for you to traverse. You are "foot-loose and heart-free" to sail beyond the sunset and to roam the universe.

What a joyous thing to see the day dawning and to know that you are bound on a voyage to new realms. "Your soul bounds upward on beams of light to the vault of heaven."

You laugh at the risks and smile at the dangers, youth's buoyant faith and self-trust is in command. The storm cannot reach you.

And lo! far ahead, above the mist and the scud, rises your Land of Beyond! We all have a Land of Beyond to seek in life—what more can we ask? Our part is to find the trail that leads to it. A long trail, a hard trail, maybe; but the call comes to us, and we have to go.

Rooted deep in the nature of every one of us is the spirit of adventure, the call of the wild—vibrating under all our actions, making life deeper and higher and nobler.

"Have you known the Great White Silence? . . .

Have you broken trail on snowshoes? mushed your huskies up the river,

Dared the unknown, led the way, and clutched the prize? . . .

Have you suffered, starved and triumphed, grovelled  
down, yet grasped at glory,  
Grown bigger in the bigness of the whole?  
'Done things' just for the doing, letting babblers tell  
the story, . . .  
Have you seen . . .  
The simple things, the true things, the silent men who  
do things—  
Then listen to the Wild—it's calling you.

Let us probe the silent places, let us seek what luck  
betide us;  
Let us journey to a lonely land I know.  
There's a whisper on the night-wind, there's a star  
agleam to guide us,  
And the Wild is calling, calling . . . let us go."

## II

### NO MORE WAR<sup>1</sup>

How vividly we remember it all, though eight years have passed since it happened!

For four weary years the dreadful noise of battle had echoed through the world: the cries of the dying, the despairing lamentations of parents and widows over the blood-stained bodies of their sons and husbands.

Then, quite suddenly, the horrible nightmare loosened its clutch, the thunder of the guns was hushed—the incredible thing had actually happened—*the World-War was at an end!*

Europe breathed freely once more, raised her head, and gazed out across the desolate battle-fields, and the smoking timbers of countless ruins, towards the horizon where day seemed about to dawn. But the light was long in coming. Dark shadows were gathering from many quarters and spreading over the earth, threatening clouds were massing, now here, now there. It seemed as though all nations were waiting for the sun to rise—but the sun did not appear! People's minds were gradually invaded by insidious doubts

<sup>1</sup> A speech delivered by Dr Fridtjof Nansen on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prizes in the Nobel Institute at Oslo, on 10th December 1926.



and uncertainties, culminating in a sense of gloomy discomfort; the feeling of apprehension grew more intense; the darkness teemed with the sinister powers of the infernal regions. Nations and classes of society regarded each other with increasing distrust and suspicion—a soil in which only thistles can flourish. Hatred sprang up, and the gathering suspicion and fear paralysed all power of initiative, while it encouraged every possible misunderstanding. Men were already talking of “the next war.”

It was as though the world, which, on the brink of the abyss, as it took a last look downwards, had stepped back to firmer ground, was again being led astray in the treacherous gloom, and sucked back into the depths.

What do they all need?

They need the kindly human virtues, which can only flourish in the light of day: forgiveness, confidence, sympathy, an honest desire for full co-operation in the task of world-reconstruction.

The peace-treaties that terminate the devastating wars of our days have resolved themselves into more or less humiliating conditions dictated by the victors to the vanquished, and they usually contain germs which will develop into another war, in due time.

The Peace of Versailles was certainly no exception. The longer the devastating trial of strength continues, the higher become its demands, till, when victory finally comes, the terms

imposed are so drastic that it may be difficult, if not actually impossible, to comply with them. Force is brought to bear to compel the vanquished to pay more than is humanly possible, with the result that they are filled with hatred and long for revenge, while the victors reap nothing but disappointment and bitterness at their failure to obtain what they feel entitled to receive, and what is needed to heal the wounds left by the War. To this is added their uncertainty and alarm as to the possible consequences when compulsion and oppression have to be used to enforce the terms. In this way difficulties constantly increase; nations become more and more estranged from one another, and the universal sense of insecurity, fear, and nervousness gives rise to fresh preparations for war. Such was the general aspect of affairs throughout Europe in 1923, more than four years after the War ended.

As Germany did not find herself in a position to furnish the indemnities to which France considered herself entitled, the French marched in and took possession of the Ruhr district. This step created a vast amount of disturbance in the producing-power of Europe as a whole, and Germany's hatred for France blazed up more fiercely than ever.

The nations of Europe fell into hopeless despondency, and the talk of the "next war" became louder.

Then, at the moment when the darkness was

at its worst, America held out a helping hand. The United States had kept aloof, and were therefore able to give an impartial judgment on the conditions affecting unhappy Europe. There was a consensus of opinion in the United States that the duty of putting Europe on her feet again had now devolved upon them. An idea which had already been mooted in December 1922 by Mr Hughes, the American minister for Foreign Affairs, was brought forward more definitely. This plan was, that Germany's capacity for payment of her indemnities should be investigated by a committee of experts, authorised to draft a suitable and scientific scheme for future deliberations.

The suggestion was finally agreed to by Poincaré and the representatives of France, and it was decided to nominate a committee of experts. The American government sent over Charles G. Dawes and Owen D. Young, and Dawes was elected chairman of the committee.

The first meeting took place in Paris, on 17th January 1924, and by 9th April of the same year the committee had already worked out a scheme, subsequently known as the Dawes Scheme, setting out a new plan for Germany's payment of indemnities, and proposing a moratorium. A further proposal dealt with the regularisation of German finances, the arrangements for an indispensable foreign loan, and so forth.

The scheme also laid great stress upon Ger-

many's need of the economical co-operation of the Ruhr district.

The significance of this scheme was so quickly realised that as soon as, by the end of July 1924, it became evident that it would be adopted by the allied governments, European credit began to improve, as was speedily shown by a decided appreciation of European currency.

The working of the scheme involved, on the one hand, a noticeable decrease in the amount fixed for Germany's war-indemnity; on the other hand, it made it possible for her to make considerable yearly payments. Its adoption led to the decision to evacuate the Ruhr district, and put an end, for the time being, to the incessant disputes over Germany's indemnities, which had to so large an extent been the cause of the disconsolate and unsettled condition of Europe throughout the first five years after peace was declared.

The important results of this scheme were not confined to Germany, France, and the allied countries. Its effect, both economically and politically, was felt throughout Europe as a whole, and consequently in America as well. It stabilised the outlook of European industry, and tidied the Continent over an acute crisis which might have proved disastrous to the cause of peace.

But the most important consequence of all was undoubtedly that psychological change in European mentality, of which it was the outcome, and which it did so much to develop. It was the beginning of the policy of peace and reconciliation

which was to culminate in the Pact of Locarno. It was the first glimmering of daylight in the long, dark night.

We must not forget another noteworthy step on the road to peace, in the Protocol of Geneva, adopted at the Meeting of the League of Nations in August 1924.

For the first time the representatives of the countries of the world recorded their considered verdict that a war of aggression is a crime; and they adopted the principle that all international disputes should, without exception, be dealt with on peaceable lines by arbitration or in a court of law.

True, the countries did not ratify this protocol; nevertheless, it too stands for a significant milestone in history; its spirit cannot be ignored by the statesmen of the future, and it will be seen that it exerted an influence upon subsequent events.

The next great milestone bears the name of LOCARNO.

And the initiative for what transpired there was taken by Germany, represented by Luther the Chancellor, and Stresemann the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Arising out of the negotiations in connection with the Protocol of Geneva, the necessity for safeguards against invasion and war was strongly urged by the French representatives, and especially by Briand, an enthusiastic supporter

of that protocol. In a Note, dated 9th February 1925, Germany now offered such guarantees as might be thought desirable, and suggested the possible formation of a Pact of Security, which might "result in a World-Convention for all countries on the lines of the Geneva Protocol drawn up by the League of Nations," "for the peaceable settlement of international disputes."

After various negotiations, it led to the Locarno Conference, between the dates of 5th and 16th October 1925. France was represented by Briand, Germany by Luther and Stresemann, Great Britain by Chamberlain, Italy by Mussolini, Belgium by Vandervelde, Poland by Skrzynski, and Czecho-Slovakia by Benes.

A Rhine pact was concluded between Germany, Belgium, France, and Great Britain, and four arbitration agreements between Germany and each of the four countries, Belgium, France, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia.

I will not now enlarge further upon the provisions of these treaties, as they are already widely known. With regard to the Rhine treaty, it is said that, for the first time since the reign of Louis XIV, it eliminates the Rhine as a cause of friction in European politics. It closes one chapter of history.

In the four arbitration agreements, the nations pledged themselves to submit all disputes for peaceable adjustment by a disinterested authority; they excepted only "disputes arising out of events



prior to the present treaty and belonging to the past."

The Locarno agreements imply a complete reconstruction of European policy as a whole, between the protagonists of the War, and instil a new spirit into their mutual relations. They are an attempt, made practically for the first time, to establish politics upon an assumption of mutual friendship and mutual confidence. It is reassuring to know that those who inaugurated the scheme were actuated neither by idealism, nor altruism; they were simply convinced of the necessity for taking such a step. The men who foregathered at Locarno were no visionary pacifists, but practical politicians and responsible statesmen, who, having previously to some extent followed paths that led in a very different direction, had arrived at the unanimous conclusion that the only possibility of ensuring a workable future for the nations was to stand shoulder to shoulder, with the genuine desire for co-operation.

That was how Briand expressed it, in his speech at the conclusion of the Conference: "The War has taught us one lesson, namely, that we are linked together by a common fate. If we sink, we shall sink together; if we retrieve our fortunes, it will not be by fighting with one another, but by co-operation." Both he and Stresemann emphasised the need for everyone to be first and foremost a good citizen in his own country: a good Frenchman, a good German, a good Englishman: but it is equally important for each one to



be a good European, that all should unite in maintaining the great ideal of European civilisation which has been so seriously menaced by the events of the late War.

If we would estimate to its fullest extent what those men at Locarno have done for the peace of Europe, we must take into consideration the powerful nationalistic opposition which most of them had to overcome in their own countries, in order to carry through the peace programme. They pursued their course courageously, convinced that they were now travelling in the right direction.

With Locarno, it looks as though a new day had really dawned, and courage and confidence are steadily returning and gaining strength throughout Europe. But there still remained agreements to be ratified; one condition was that Germany should be admitted to the League of Nations, and that was evidently attended with graver difficulties than had been expected. The deplorable special session in Geneva, in March 1926, is fresh in men's minds; when the national delegates met for the express purpose of admitting Germany into the League, and were obliged to disperse without carrying that purpose into execution.

But that was followed by the Assembly at Geneva in September, when the German delegates, with Stresemann at their head, were admitted with full honours, and took their place among the members of the League. No one who was present can ever forget that moment!

Briand celebrated Germany's admission in a wonderful speech: "No more War! Henceforth it will be the duty of the judge to see that the law is observed. As the individual citizen submits his grievances to the decision of the judge, so must we bring our international difficulties to be solved by peaceful methods. Away with our rifles, machine-guns, and cannon! Clear the way for conciliation, arbitration, and peace!"

We are out in the daylight at last! Doesn't it almost seem as though we are looking upon the new earth which is to flourish after Ragnarök?

The agreements of Locarno, together with Germany's admission to the League of Nations, and the speeches made on those occasions, were full of promise for the future, and were calculated to restore confidence, and to hearten those who were prepared to work. But all this must not tempt us to ignore the fact that there is a long way to travel before the goal is reached, and a lasting peace actually secured. The kindly words and honourable intentions of the leaders are very encouraging, but they are not enough; we must have action as well, and a great deal of vigilant work.

It has often happened that the brightest hopes come to nothing, and that a blue and promising sky may be overcast by storm-clouds.

Our watchword must be: "No more war!"

What does that mean?

Not "No more world-war," leaving us free to have little private wars whenever we may want

them. Not "no more war," except when, with hardly any risk to ourselves, we can crush some weaker neighbour who falls an easy victim to our power. Not "no more war," except when some matter may arise which affects what in times past we used to call our national honour.

It is none of these things; it is no more war of any kind, no more aggression, no more of the bloody and purposeless conflicts which have so long smirched the history of mankind. It is a movement to rid the politics of the nations of the world of the use of force, and the suppression of others in any form; to get rid once and for all—as we in this generation can do, if we choose—of the hideous anachronism of the institution of warfare among the different sections of the human race, whether it be between one country and another, or within the borders of any specific country.

This cause—I say it without hesitation—is the greatest of all causes at the present day. The problem of how to get rid of war is the first of all questions, not only in international politics, but in national politics as well. To many persons that may seem an overstatement, perhaps even an extravagance of language. To them, the question of the coal dispute, questions of social reform, or reconstruction, questions, it may be, of tariff barriers, questions of defence, of prohibition, and so forth, will seem far more important.

I say with absolute conviction that those who think thus are wrong. War, preparation for war, armaments—these are the first and vital problems

If we can raise barriers against war, if we can get rid of the burden of armaments that we are bearing, if we can slay the evil monsters of militarism that still stalk through the world, then we shall get, and get quickly, the social reforms we desire, the development of our possibilities, the progress of whatever kind we are hoping for. We shall advance irresistibly towards a new and better existence.

But if we do not get rid of war, if we do not end it altogether, if we do not reduce and limit our armaments, then we shall get no reform and no lasting progress worth having. We may be very sure that in the future, as in the past, armaments will breed counter-armaments; they will breed alliances and counter-alliances, suspicion and distrust; they will stir up fear in the hearts of the peoples, they will produce international crises, they will lead at first, perhaps, to small local wars, but in the long run, and inevitably, to a great world-war like that which we have seen in our own day and generation. If we retain our armaments, if we do not carry through the work of disarmament which the League of Nations has so successfully initiated, war will certainly ensue. I say this with absolute confidence; all our experience in the past has made it obvious. But I do not ask you to attach any weight to my personal views; we can refer to higher authorities. Lord Grey, Foreign Secretary for Great Britain when war was declared, has said, and said repeatedly, that the War of 1914 was caused by the inflated armaments of Europe;

and he has warned us that if we allow our armaments to remain as they are, and embark on another world-wide competition in military preparation, war will again inevitably follow; he further reminds us that another war will mean the end of civilisation as we know it to-day.

Who will dispute the authority of Lord Grey? And he is not alone in making such a statement. The same thing has been said time after time by other leading statesmen. They have told us, not once, but often, that another world-war would wipe out European civilisation. Let me only mention the present Prime Minister of Great Britain. So recently as January of this year, Mr Baldwin said that with one more war in the West—I quote his words—the civilisation of the ages will fall with as great a crash as that of Rome.

The men I have quoted above are not fanatics, they are not even pacifists; they are responsible statesmen who have wielded and still wield great power in world affairs. If the phrases they use are spoken seriously, it seems to me to follow that hardly any other question in politics is worth discussion, until this problem of the next war has been solved.

Let us examine their statements for a moment. It may seem fantastic to say that our civilisation may be wiped out. None of us feel that such a thing could happen; we have a sense of strength and power, we see a great future opening out before us. But history tells us that civilisations *have* been wiped out before now. Mighty em-

pires, which seemed as strong as the most powerful empires of our day seem to us now, have disappeared. The Roman Empire, which ruled Europe for a period of centuries exceeding the length of our modern Western civilisation, was swept away by the incursions of barbarian hordes.

You have no sense of impending disaster; you feel the forces of life too strongly around you. I, too, am sensible of those forces. I feel as you do, but I also feel that our civilisation received a rude shock in the last war, a shock from which it has by no means recovered as yet. It seemed as though the very foundations of Europe had been shaken. She is still very far from sound, and the worst of all is that most Europeans do not yet grasp the significance of that last war. They are forgetting it already, before they have learned the lessons which it ought to teach. They are forgetting their dead. There are, of course, many millions of men in almost every country in this continent who are unable to forget its horrors. The slaughter of the battlefields once seen is not easily forgotten.

These men will tell you of the pitiless holocaust of the beautiful fields of France, and the agony of the great bombardment of a modern battle; of the unspeakable torture of men hanging wounded and broken, it might be for days, upon barbed wire defences, and begging by their screams for the speedy death which they were powerless to inflict upon themselves. These men could tell you of such horrors, and of even worse, and if Europe would listen to them, if its peoples would only



remember the bestial filthiness of war, its savage cruelty, they would see to it that war should never come about again.

There are other sides of war, of which I have perhaps seen more than most men. For more than six years now it has been my task on behalf of the League of Nations to investigate, and as far as possible to try and rectify, the hideous aftermath of war. During all those years I have had to deal with hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war; with famines; with fleeing, panic-stricken refugees; with the never-ending, heartbreaking tragedies of old men and women and tiny children, whom the chances of war have left alone, forlorn, robbed, destitute of everything they valued in the world.

I wish I could give you some pictures of the things I have seen, could make you for one moment feel the incredible sufferings of the prisoners of war in the Siberian camps, from which we brought them home after they had been separated for years—five, six, even seven years—from their families, their parents, their wives and children. They had endured, for every hour of every day, the suffering of men whose lives and hopes were buried in a living grave.

I wish I could make you feel what it is to see a whole people on the road, fleeing for their lives in a wild panic of fear; or to visit a people stricken by famine, to enter huts where men, women and children lay motionless, no longer complaining, but just waiting for death; or the nightmare of a



country where corpses are dug up from the churchyards, to be used for food, and where mothers, in mad desperation, kill and eat their own children. . . . But no! I cannot attempt it now!

All these endless horrors, this misery, these incredible sufferings, these hundreds of thousands of abandoned prisoners of war, these famines, these millions of helpless refugees are the result, direct or indirect, of the War. And believe me, such things cannot happen without weakening the social system under which we live. They undermine the very foundations of our civilisation. They sap the vitality of our peoples, they leave behind them wounds and deep scars that take very long to heal. And after all that, we can talk of the probability of the next war! Do we think of what it means? Even if the next war were only like the last, I believe it might wipe out our civilisation. But, of course, the next war will not be like the last. It will be incomparably worse.

I will not trouble you with any more arguments on that point. It is enough that if another war comes we are threatened with the annihilation of our civilisation, in the same way that past civilisations have been annihilated.

But we have also the means we need for removing that menace. We men need have no war unless we will it. War is not due to some inevitable catastrophe of nature; it is due to human will, to the infamy of mankind. For indeed, as politics go, it is comparatively easy to get rid of war. May I suggest the policy by which I believe it could be done?

The governments of Europe must throw themselves into what I will call, for convenience, the policy of the League of Nations. Make no mistake about it, the League of Nations is not a visionary abstraction, it is a living organism. Its institutions are now an essential part of the machinery of the government of the world. If we can support those institutions—the policy of disarmament, the policies for which the League of Nations stands—with the full weight of the authority of our governments, we shall make an end of war.

But the governments of Europe—those of the great as well as of the small nations—must adopt this policy wholeheartedly and unreservedly. There must be no clinging to the old privileges of waging private wars. There must be no lingering thought that if the League is weak in some direction it may perhaps serve our private interests. We must have no reserves. We must set out on a new path in international affairs, a path opened to us at Locarno, and we must destroy the bridges behind us which lead back to the old policy, and the old system, both of which are such utter failures. I have always believed that in the big things of life it was vitally important to leave no line of retreat. This may sound like a paradox. I hold it to be a most profound truth, and one of especial importance as regards these matters.

Our success will obviously depend to a large extent on the attitude of the great nations towards

these questions. But we small nations can also achieve much.

For the great nations there are so many considerations, so many diverging interests to guard, that it is often difficult for leaders to act on their own convictions; they must always consider the political currents among their own peoples, must take into account the more or less nationalistic ambitions, and the complicated political wire-pulling by which they are often impeded. All this may limit their freedom of action.

Small nations and their leaders are less hampered in these respects. They have fewer diverging interests; for them the unlimited policy of peace, without any reserves, is a more natural programme. The small nations must fix their eyes unwaveringly on the goal, and be strong in their determination to work methodically through the League of Nations, to lay for ever the uncanny ghost of war; then they will be able to accomplish much, and will essentially strengthen the League.

It cannot be denied that on some occasions the great Powers have undoubtedly appeared to behave somewhat high-handedly, and without showing due consideration for the other members of the League. But these members have a right to make their voices heard, and if they omit to do so the responsibility falls chiefly on themselves. As Briand said in his great speech at the last Assembly, there must in the future be an end to proceedings which do not "partake of the true spirit of the League of Nations"; the work must be carried

on in full daylight, and "the League must collaborate by means of all its members, great and small, without distinction."

The important thing is then that all Members, and not least the small nations, should concentrate on the business of getting rid of war; that they should take an active part in this work, *acting* not merely waiting passively. If we really want to rid ourselves of war, to do away with the heavy burden of armaments, our governments must join the League of Nations wholeheartedly, and without preparing any line of retreat. They must work in every way and on every occasion to build up its influence and strength. If they do this, if their nations back them up in the same spirit, the evil monster of war will be slain, and our future safe-guarded, enabling us to carry on the constructive work of peace, *to build up and not to pull down.*



### III

#### PEACE <sup>1</sup>

IN the Capitol at Rome, the marble statue of the Dying Gaul has always seemed to me, in its simple pathos, one of the most beautiful. He is lying, mortally wounded, on the field of battle; his muscular body, inured to labour and warfare, has abandoned itself to its fate. The shaggy head is bent, the strong neck droops, the coarse, powerful, work-hardened hands, that so lately wielded a sword, are now pressed against the ground in a last attempt to support the failing body. . . .

He had been driven out to fight for strange, unknown gods, far from his own country, and so he met his doom, and lies there bleeding silently to death. The fight rages round him, but his ears no longer hear it; his eyes are dulled to outward sights. Perhaps his last conscious thought is of the home of his childhood, of the simple, happy life in his native land amidst the forests of Gaul.

That is how I see suffering humanity—the suffering peoples of Europe—bleeding to death on the battlefields at the close of a conflict which, to a very large extent, was not their own.

<sup>1</sup> A speech delivered by Dr Fridtjof Nansen in Oslo, December 1922, after he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Lust of power, imperialism, materialism, have run their berserk-race across the world. Fields of ripened crops have been trodden beneath iron-shod heels, the earth lies waste, society is shaken to its very foundations. The nations bow their heads in mute despair. The piercing battle-cry still echoes round them, but they scarcely heed it now. Their eyes are searching for the simple, primitive elements of life, shut away in the Eden which they have forfeited.

The soul of the world is sick unto death, courage has failed, ideals have grown dim, the desire to live is destroyed; the far-off blue sky has been obscured by the fiery clouds of destruction—faith in a coming dawn has almost vanished.

To whom shall we turn for a remedy?

To the politicians? True, their intentions are good, at least in many cases; but it is plain that the world needs no more politics, no new political programmes; it has had only too many of them already. The aim of politics has degenerated till they are little better than a struggle for supremacy.

Can the diplomats help us? They mean well too, perhaps, but they are a barren race in these days, and have done humanity more harm than good of late. Think of the settlements after some of the great wars: the Peace of Westphalia, the Congress of Vienna, with the Holy Alliance, and all the rest of it. Has the world really benefited by any one of these diplomatic congresses? We may recollect Oxenstjerna's famous remark to his son, who was grieving over the negotiations in



Westphalia: "You should realise, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed."

No, it is evidently not from the leaders that we must hope for redress. Of late, we have had experience of one diplomatic and political congress after another; has a single one of them brought any sort of remedy or relief appreciably nearer? There is one sitting now, at Lausanne; let us hope it may at least bring us the badly-needed peace in the East, and leave us with at any rate one problem the less to tackle.

What about the disease itself, the actual root of evil? It is rumoured that France does not really wish to come to terms with Germany; does not really wish Germany to pay off her indemnities, for they would then lose their pretext for continuing to occupy the left bank of the Rhine frontier, and could no longer disturb German industry by intimidating the Ruhr district. Shameful backstair gossip, of course. But to think that such a rumour can even exist.

It is also whispered that the German captains of industry do not really desire a settlement with France—they would prefer to pursue the same course of vacillation and uncertainty; for then the mark will continue to fall, and German commerce can go ahead, whereas, with a settlement, the mark would be stabilised, or rise again, and German trade would be ruined, as it would no longer be able to enter into competition.

This may or may not be true; but the mere fact that such things can be said illustrates the extent

to which the whole of Europe has been and is being tossed like a ball from hand to hand among unscrupulous speculators, political speculators, financial speculators—blockheads for the most part, no doubt, men of inferior capacity who do not understand the trend of events—but, in any case, they are speculators, gambling with the most precious interests of European society.

And why are they doing it?

Simply to get power. The miserable struggle for supremacy, the terrible crushing-down of everyone and everything for the sake of power; the devastating strife between nations and between different classes of society, to obtain more power.

When one has stood face to face with famine, nay, with death from starvation, one knows what it means to see misery at its climax. When one has seen the wizened faces of children, their big, beseeching eyes staring hopelessly out into the fading daylight; or met the eyes of a worn-out mother, pressing her dying child to her empty breast, in speechless anguish; or has looked on those spectres of men, lying exhausted in the cold on the floors of their huts, with just one thing to look forward to—the coming of merciful Death; then one can really understand whither things are tending, and realise a little of what is at stake.

There is no question here of a struggle for power; it is only a terrible indictment of the many persons who still refuse to see what is happening;

and an earnest prayer goes up that some drop of compassion may give the sufferers a chance of life.

Yes, when one has once seen all the distress close at hand in this misgoverned Europe of ours, and experienced something of the endless suffering, how can one help feeling that the world no longer needs programmes, or papers, or words? There is need for action, strenuous and persistent endeavour, starting from the very foundation to rebuild the world once more.

The history of mankind rises and falls like a wave. Europe has been in the trough of a wave before now. It was the case a hundred years ago, after the Napoleonic Wars. Anyone who has read Worm-Muller's capital book on the condition of affairs in Norway at that time cannot but be struck by the extraordinary likeness between the depression then and at the present time in many respects. It is some consolation to know that it was surmounted then, and will be again; but it took a sadly long time, thirty or forty years.

Now, the trough is even deeper, as far as I can see, for its extent is much greater, embracing as it does the larger part of Europe; and, in addition, matters are more complicated, more involved. Of course, there were industrial interests in those days, but people were far more extensively dependent upon agriculture. Now, trade has become all-important, and it is far harder for it to revive after a period of depression than for agriculture to do so. A few favourable seasons will restore prosperity to agriculture, but many years

are needed to create fresh markets for our industries.

Still, we are perhaps justified in hoping that rehabilitation will be more speedily accomplished this time; things move so much more rapidly nowadays, with our improved methods of intercommunication, and the numerous facilities which lie within our reach. But as yet there is not much sign of progress, we are not yet out of the trough of the wave.

What is the prevailing feeling among the nations of Europe?

Principally one of despair, or else of suspicion of everything and everybody culminating in hatred and misunderstanding; while the dragon's teeth of hatred are being sown between nations and classes.

It is impossible to build the future on a basis of despair, suspicion, hatred, and misunderstanding. The first requisite is undoubtedly understanding—understanding, in the first place, of the trend of the times, of the motives at work in the hearts of the people—in short, an understanding of the whole psychology, bewildered and confused though it appears, of European society.

Such a measure of understanding cannot be attained in a single day. But the first condition for attaining it is a sincere desire to understand; we are well on our way when we have gone thus far. It is certain that nothing will be gained by the constant attacks on divergences of opinion which meet our eyes every day in our newspapers. Abuse convinces nobody, it only

lowers and brutalises those who make use of it. Still less can anything be gained by lies and false accusations, which have a way of recoiling upon those who disseminate them.

It should also be borne in mind that there is hardly a single corporate movement or tendency without its definite and logical cause and justification, be it socialism, capitalism, fascism, or even the odious Bolshevism. But the cause of such acute antagonism is the ignorant fanaticism for and against—more especially against—these movements, so that the exhausting conflict only ends in destruction, at a time when a free exchange of opinions, aided by intelligence and intelligent action, might promote an advance worth supporting.

It would take too long now to go more fully into this matter, but the saying about seeing the mote in our brother's eye, and failing to discern the beam in our own eyes, applies to all ages, and not least to the present one.

It is the lack of understanding—and more particularly the lack of any *desire* to understand—that has caused the ferment of insecurity which threatens us to-day with complete ruin. No one knows what to-morrow may bring forth. Many people are living, in the outer world at all events, as though each day might be their last, and things are falling into ruin on every hand. Everything is slipping down . . . down.

One of the most fatal consequences of this insecurity, this speculation in insecurities, is the

increasing disinclination for work engendered by the War, and growing steadily ever since. It was the result, as we all know, of jobbery and speculation, which enabled people to make their fortunes in a very short time; they expected to live on them for the remainder of their lives, and there would no longer be any need for them to work hard. That was the beginning of the disinclination to work, and it continues to the present time. Few people are willing to undertake really hard work honestly and loyally. The only places in which I have come across a genuine readiness to work are those in which the Angel of Starvation is reaping his sinister harvest.

I remember one day in a country town east of the Volga, in which only about one-third of the inhabitants were left; the other two-thirds were either fugitives or had died of starvation. Most of the cattle had been slaughtered; but the courage of the people was not quite extinguished, and, dark though their prospects were, they still cherished a faint hope for the future.

"Give us seed-corn," they begged us, "and we will manage to sow it." "Yes," we replied, "but how will you do that if you have no cattle to plough with?" "Never mind about that" was their answer, "if we have no cattle, we will harness ourselves, our wives and children to the plough." There was no love of pleasure, no self-indulgence, nothing artificial about that reply: it was just the will to live, which refused to be crushed out.



Must we all experience the bitter pangs of starvation before we have learnt the real value of work?

Let me give you some examples from Germany.

I have been told that in Germany the hours of employment are so short, and the rate of output so restricted, that it is impossible to get out the coal required for Germany's own use, and they are forced to buy coal from England—I think the amount mentioned was a million tons per month—and pay for it at the foreign rate of exchange. If the working-day in Germany could be lengthened by one hour, Germany could produce her own coal. That is typical of the state of affairs.

In Switzerland, where everything is at a low ebb, where trade is ruined because goods can no longer be produced at the prices current in the markets of the world, I was told that if the working-day could be raised to ten hours, with a reasonable rate of wages, the workers would be able to get employment during the whole week, instead of, as at present, for perhaps three days, as the factories are kept running at a loss just to provide the workers with a living wage. The men would gladly work longer hours, but they dare not do so; it would mean abandoning their programme. And so things go on there.

These deplorable conditions are, of course, partly due to the rate of exchange, and the unforeseeable fluctuations of the currency. It seems to me that there are certain problems of which not



even the experts can give us any satisfactory explanation.

Beneath these quite obvious causes there lie, naturally, greater and more deeply-rooted ones. It is evident that men cannot live without work, and for a long time there has been too little work. I may be asked, what is the good of working if there is no market for the goods produced? And there are *not* markets for them. But markets need working up, too. If no work is carried on in those places where markets ought to exist, there will be no purchasing-power, and that will affect everybody. The want of work is a universal disease. And it is impossible for regular, honest work to be carried on, except where peace and confidence are to be found—confidence in oneself, in others, and in the future.

This brings me to the gist of the matter. How is this confidence in the future to be attained? Is it to be the work of diplomats and politicians? I have already stated my opinion on that head. Perhaps they may get something done; but I have not very much faith that they will, nor do I think that the individual politicians of any one country can do much either. The only remedy I can see lies in the co-operation and honest good-will of the nations as a whole.

I believe that the road to this lies through the League of Nations. If a new order of things cannot be brought about with its help, I can see no other remedy, at any rate for the time being.

What grounds have we for reposing so great a

hope on the League of Nations? What has it accomplished thus far in the way of restoring peace and confidence? In asking this question we must remember that the League is still a tender plant, liable to be easily injured, and to have its growth stunted by the night frosts of doubt. We must remember that the League will not attain its full strength until it embraces all nations, including those great powers which are at present excluded. And yet, in the course of its brief existence, it has already dealt with matters which give promise of a brighter future. I may mention, *inter alia*, that in this short time it has already adjusted several controversies which would otherwise have led, if not to actual war, at least to serious disturbances.

There was, for example, the dispute between Sweden and Finland over the Aaland Islands. Some people were dissatisfied with the solution, but at all events they accepted and acquiesced in it, and no further disturbance of the peace ensued.

Jugo-Slavia and Albania had a serious dispute over their boundaries. The Serbian troops had actually crossed the frontier when the League of Nations intervened, adjusted the difficulty, and both parties accepted the decision without further trouble.

I may also instance the Silesian question, which threatened to arouse grave disturbances between Germany and Poland. That was settled—very badly, some people say, others maintain that it could not have been arranged differently, having regard to the tenor of the earlier clauses of the

Peace of Versailles; the fact remains that both parties accepted the award, and that no further serious trouble has arisen on that score.

There is also the case of Poland and Lithuania. It is true that the League of Nations could not adjudicate—the question proved too intricate, for various reasons with which I will not trouble you; but it is a fact that the mere knowledge that the League had the matter under consideration prevented the two parties from taking up arms against one another.

It may be objected that these were disputes between small nations; but supposing serious disputes should arise between the Great Powers,—would they be willing to accept the award of the League of Nations? Well, take the Silesian question once again. Germany is not a small nation, and yet it is a fact that the victorious powers, who ought to have settled the matter, were unable to agree about it, and it was therefore delegated to the League of Nations.

But we have had a better example quite recently of the willingness of the Great Powers to comply with the rulings of the League of Nations, in a dispute that arose between Great Britain and France.

In 1921 the French Government issued a decree enacting that every male resident in Tunis and Morocco should be liable to conscription. This meant that British subjects, domiciled in those French protectorates, would also become liable to French military service. The British Govern-

ment made a strong protest; the French argued that it was a question of domestic policy. Neither side would yield, and the dispute was becoming serious. Nine years ago such a question could only have terminated in war, or in an expensive diplomatic conference. There was then no world-wide organisation capable of undertaking the settlement of such a problem. It was entrusted to the League of Nations, and the tension was immediately relaxed.

The mere fact that the League of Nations has established a permanent international tribunal constitutes a great and significant advance in the direction of the more peaceable government of the world; it is a step towards restoring international confidence. Through the International Labour Office the League has done good work in another and equally important direction.

If anyone is still doubtful as to the position occupied at present by the League of Nations in the estimation of neighbouring countries, I would refer him to the last election in Great Britain. Out of 1386 candidates who offered themselves for election, only 3 ventured to meet their constituents with the declaration that they were opposed to the League of Nations. Two or three others did not refer to it, but all the rest expressed their belief in the League.

In my opinion, the greatest and most important piece of work which the League has undertaken, and which heralds the coming of newer and better days for Europe, is that which was introduced at

the last Assembly in Geneva, with a view to facilitate an international loan to Austria, and thus afford that country some hope of recovery from the economic ruin that threatened it. And it has aroused hopes of something beyond this attempt; the hope of a fresh and promising recovery in Europe's economical policy.

It is my belief that the German problem, the complications between Germany and its antagonists, never can and never will be solved until it, too, has been laid before the League of Nations.

Then, with reference to the vexed question of the extent of partial or entire disarmament, preliminary steps were taken at the last Assembly at Geneva; and here, as in nearly every other field of the League's activities, one name shines out above all the rest; it is that of Lord Robert Cecil. When that particular question of disarmament comes up for discussion, we must remember that it is fraught with difficulties, chief among which is the fact that there are important military powers who are not yet members of the League.

Still more imperative than the disarmament of armies and navies is the disarmament of men's minds, the instilling of sympathy into their natures. A great and important work is being carried on in this respect, in which the League of Nations is taking an active part.

I must place in the foremost rank the stupendous work which the Americans have initiated, under the wonderful leadership of Hoover. It started during the war with "Belgian Relief," and

supported many thousands of people, including children, in Belgium. After the War, the work was shifted to Central Europe, where hundreds of thousands of children were given a fresh lease of life through the *splendid* help of the Americans; last, but not least, they extended their activities to Russia. When the complete record of that work comes to be written, it will stand out as a unique and shining page in the history of mankind and of altruism, as a star of consolation in a long and dark night. By means of other associations, the American Red Cross and the Near East Relief, the Americans have also accomplished impossibilities in the Balkans, in Asia Minor, and, recently, in Greece. I must not forget to mention that there were many European organisations, especially the units of the Red Cross, at work in various countries, and that they all rendered much assistance both during and after the War.

Shortly after its inauguration, the League of Nations began to occupy itself with activities of this description. First came the task of repatriating the many thousands of prisoners of war, who, although two years had passed since the War was ended, were scattered all over the Continent, the greater number of them being in Siberia, and Eastern and Central Europe. I will not enlarge upon that here, as it has already been dealt with at the meeting in the Nobel Institute. I will just say that, as a result of that work, over 450,000 prisoners were restored to their homes, and, in some degree, to productive occupations.



The League of Nations next started a campaign against the epidemics which threatened invasion from Eastern Europe; they dealt with epidemics in Poland, on the Russian frontier, and in Russia itself. The admirable Epidemics Commission worked indefatigably in the prevention of virulent diseases, and rescued thousands of people from want and collapse.

Through a special organisation the League of Nations is now working to provide subsistence for the many poverty-stricken Russian refugees, of whom more than a million are dispersed throughout Europe.

I must not omit to state what is being done at the present time to help the distressed refugees in Asia Minor and in Greece. That work has only just been started, but may prove of great significance. As things are now, those regions are menaced with even more serious disorganisation and despair than any other part of Europe. If only that can be lessened and relieved, if that plague-spot can only be partially healed, then there is one danger-spot less in the common life of Europe, one risk the less of unrest, of dissension, of disintegrating canker in the future.

Let me repeat what I said on a previous occasion of the great significance of such work as this. Help given to the thousands of homes whose men are just returning, helped in their time of need, what gratitude it creates, what faith, what trust in humanity and in the future, what possibilities for more wholesome conditions of labour. All this is,



it seems to me, of greater significance for peace than many a high-political document, which seldom gets much further than a constantly-changing group of politicians and diplomats.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about helping Russia. The League of Nations was not in favour of this, to my great regret; for I cannot but think that if the League had supported the suggestion with its weighty authority, before it was too late, the situation would have been saved in Russia, and the state of things in Russia and Europe would have been quite different, and much more satisfactory than it is now.

I will not say more now about the work which is being done. Let me only call your attention to the fact that the real difficulty has not been to procure food, or to distribute it to those who were starving. No, there was more than enough wheat in the world then, as there is to-day, and there was no lack of transport. Our problem was to get enough money; that has always been the difficulty with our relief work, and continues to be so at the present moment.

As the European Governments refused us a loan of ten million pounds sterling, which I considered absolutely essential if we were to save Russia's starving millions, and stave off the terrible calamity of famine, not only in that country but in Europe as a whole, there was nothing for it but to see what could be done privately, by making an appeal to private beneficence all the world over.

The response was magnificent, beyond all ex-

pectation. Money poured in from all countries, and not least from our own. Although some of our fellow-countrymen thought it right to join in opposing us, yet, thanks to the Norwegian parliament and the Norwegian Government, as well as to the excellent work of the Famine Committee, our own little country contributed so liberally that, if the other large countries had given anything like as much in proportion, the Russian famine would by now have been a thing of the past.

There was one exception, but that was not in Europe. Once again America contributed more than anyone else, first through Hoover's organisation, and later through the Government itself, which contributed twenty million dollars to fight the famine, on condition that the Russian Government should give ten millions towards the purchase of seed-corn. Taken all round, America must have given fifty to sixty million dollars for the campaign against the Russian famine, and saved millions and millions of lives.

How was it that some people refused to help?

Well, you must ask *them*. Chiefly for political reasons. They represented that barren self-sufficiency, with its absence of any wish to understand other points of view, which is Europe's greatest danger at the present time. They call us fanatics, soft-heads, sentimental idealists, because we have, it may be, a grain of faith that there is some good even in our enemies, and believe that more can be done by kindness than by severity.

Admitting that we believe in kindness, I don't think we are really very dangerous. But the people who are ossifying behind their political platforms, and who hold aloof from suffering humanity, from starving, dying millions—it is they who are helping to lay Europe waste.

It is not only in Russia that we are threatened with a new and terrible famine; the outlook is black enough all over Europe, and no one can say how things will go there. The distress is so intense, so nearly overwhelming, the state of affairs so desperate, both in the rich and fertile districts of Russia and in other countries as well, that, notwithstanding the private contributions we are receiving, it seems as though anything we can accomplish is a mere drop in the ocean.

We must all work together. We must send round the fiery cross, must kindle our beacons till their light streams from every mountain-top. We must hoist our banner in all countries, must encircle the world with a chain of brotherhood; the Governments must join hands with us; all must stand shoulder to shoulder, not in battle-array, but in honest labour for the New Era.

The white festival of Christmas is at hand, with its message to mankind: "Peace on earth."

Never has suffering and erring mankind longed more ardently for the Prince of Peace, for the men who hear His call, for the leaders of humanity who raise the white banner upon which one word—**WORK**—shines forth in golden letters.

Each one of us can enlist in that army, and join

## PEACE

its victorious progress through the world to inaugurate a new creation—to bring in brotherly love, and an honest wish for peace; to restore to mankind the will to work, and the joy in work; to give back to men their faith in the dawn of a better day.

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